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## Local Government & Housing Committee

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### SSB 5219

**Brief Description:** Establishing a focus group to examine the need to provide housing for certain populations at risk of being homeless.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Carrell, Regala, Hargrove, Kline, Brandland, Swecker, Stevens and King).

#### Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes a focus group to examine homelessness issues.
- Requires a report to the Governor and the Legislature by November 15, 2009.
- Authorizes the focus group to use Legislative facilities and staff.
- Expires the focus group on December 1, 2009.

**Hearing Date:** 3/23/09

**Staff:** Sara del Moral (786-7291) and Ethan Moreno (786-7386)

#### **Background:**

##### Housing Assistance Programs.

The Legislature has funded many programs that provide housing assistance to the homeless, some of which focus on populations who are being released from institutions, have mental health issues, or have chemical dependency problems. These programs include:

- the Reentry Housing Pilot Program, which funds housing and support services for offenders who are under the supervision of the Department of Corrections;
- the Transitional Housing Operating and Rent program, which helps homeless families transition to permanent housing; and
- the Homeless Grant Assistance Program, which awards grants to counties for projects that reduce homelessness.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

## Residential Landlord-Tenant Act.

The Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (Act) defines the minimum duties of landlords and tenants of residential dwellings. These laws also impose certain restrictions and provide remedies if one party fails to carry out a duty. The remedies include eviction, reduced rent, and an award of attorneys' fees to the successful party. Landlords and tenants of mobile homes are not subject to the rules of the Act.

### **Summary of Bill:**

A focus group is established to examine the need to provide housing for individuals at risk of homelessness including, but not limited to persons:

- suffering from mental illness;
- with criminal backgrounds; and
- with chemical or alcohol dependency issues.

The focus group must recommend actions in a number of issue areas. Examples include:

- methods to encourage private landlords to provide housing to at-risk populations;
- existing programs that provide housing assistance to at-risk populations and advisable methods of providing housing assistance; and
- statutory changes to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act.

The focus group must invite participation from a number of groups, including:

- members of the Legislature;
- crime victims;
- multifamily housing and landlord associations; and
- other interested groups as appropriate.

By November 15, 2009, the focus group must present a report of its findings and recommendations, as well as any proposed legislation, to the Governor and to the appropriate committees of the Legislature.

### Facilities, Staff, Compensation, and Expiration.

The focus group may use Legislative facilities. Senate Committee Services and the Office of Program Research must provide staff support.

Nonlegislative focus group members must serve without compensation.

Legislative members of the focus group may not be reimbursed for any travel expenses incurred as a result of participation in the group.

Provisions establishing the focus group and prescribing its composition and duties expire on December 1, 2009.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.